

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: OAS CHARTER REFORM - STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR
MAILLIARD IN THE OAS GENERAL COMMITTEE

REF: STATE 279335

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
AMBASSADOR MAILLIARD IN THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE OAS AT
3:30 PM ON NOVEMBER 26:

"MR. CHAIRMAN:

"I HAVE ASKED TO BE RECOGNIZED TODAY TO MAKE A STATE-
MENT ON BEHALF OF MY GOVERNMENT, A STATEMENT TO WHICH WE
HAVE GIVEN THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

"MR. CHAIRMAN, MY DELEGATION HAS COME TO THE CONCLU-
SION THAT OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO REFORM AND RESTRUCTURE
THE OAS, AN EFFORT WE BEGAN SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY NEARLY
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THREE YEARS AGO AND FROM WHICH ALL OF US EXPECTED SUBSTAN-

TIAL RESULTS, HAS NOT SUCCEEDED. THE DRAFT CHARTER THAT IS ABOUT TO EMERGE BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE PROJECT FOR BASIC AND THOROUGHGOING REFORM WHICH ALL OF US SOUGHT.

"AS YOU KNOW, MY DELEGATION HAS SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS TO A NUMBER OF ARTICLES IN THE DRAFT CHARTER. WHAT TROUBLES US MOST, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE DOCUMENT AS A WHOLE FAILS TO EMBODY A CONSENSUAL VISION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL MEMBER STATES. IN ADDITION, THE RELATIVELY MODEST CHANGES MADE, OFTEN WELL SHORT OF UNANIMITY, DO LITTLE TO ADAPT THE OAS TO AN ERA OF RAPID TRANSITION IN OUR HEMISPHERE AND THE WORLD. MY DELEGATION IS PREPARED TO ADMIT ITS FULL SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY. RATHER THAN ALTERING THE SYSTEM TO REFLECT NEW REALITIES, WE ENGAGED IN A LEGALISTIC EXERCISE TO REWRITE THE CHARTER, ARTICLE BY ARTICLE. THE RESULT HAS BEEN A DOCUMENT THAT HIGHLIGHTS OUR DISAGREEMENTS BUT DOES LITTLE TO MAKE THE OAS THE EMBODIMENT OF REGIONAL COOPERATION WHICH OUR MANDATE REQUIRED.

"WE BELIEVE THE TIME HAS COME FOR EACH OF OUR GOVERNMENTS TO UNDERTAKE THE MOST REALISTIC ANALYSIS OF WHAT IT IS THAT THE OAS SHOULD PROVIDE US, JOINTLY AND SINGLY, AND WHAT WE SHOULD GIVE TO THE OAS TO DO THAT JOB. OUR CONCERN IS NOT SIMPLY THAT PHRASES IN THE DRAFT CHARTER BE REWORDED OR RELOCATED OR EVEN EXCISED, BUT THAT THE WHOLE PROCESS OF REFORM BE READDRESSSED WITH A CLEAR OBJECTIVE OF MAKING THE INSTITUTIONS MORE RESPONSIVE.

"MY GOVERNMENT ADVANCES THIS VIEW WITH THE UTMOST SERIOUSNESS. WE WILL BE APPROACHING GOVERNMENTS IN THE HEMISPHERE TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH AN EFFORT, A JOINT REASSESSMENT WORTHY OF OUR HOPES FOR THIS ORGANIZATION. OUR EXPECTATION IS THAT, WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE A SYNTHESIS OF VIEWS AND LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION.

"TODAY BOTH APPEARANCES AND REALITY COMBINE TO CREATE WIDESPREAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE WORKABILITY AND USEFULNESS OF OUR ORGANIZATION. THOUGH IT IS PAINFUL TO
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ADMIT THEM TO OURSELVES, A NUMBER OF WIDELY HELD MISPERCEPTIONS WEAKEN THE VITALITY OF THIS ORGANIZATION. ONE PARTICULARLY DAMAGING MYTH IS THAT THE OAS IS A CREATURE OF THE UNITED STATES, AUTOMATICALLY SUBSERVIENT TO THE INTERESTS OF ITS LARGEST MEMBER. ANOTHER CONTENTION IS THAT THE OAS IS A USELESS DEBATING SOCIETY DEVOTED LARGE- LY TO ITS OWN EXPENSIVE MAINTENANCE. STILL OTHERS HOLD THAT THE OAS RESEMBLES NOTHING SO MUCH AS A GENTLEMEN'S

CLUB, DEDICATED TO PRIVILEGE AND EXCLUSIVITY AND INEPT IN DEALING WITH THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACING THE PEOPLES OF OUR HEMISPHERE.

"THE FALLACY OF THESE CONTENTIONS IS OBVIOUS TO THOSE

OF US WHO HAVE WORKED TO FORGE THIS ORGANIZATION INTO A VITAL LINK AMONG OUR COUNTRIES. IN THE PAST YEAR ALONE, AFTER A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND INNOVATIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OUR REPRESENTATIVES MET IN SAN JOSE AND APPROVED A MORE MODERN AND DEMOCRATIC RIO TREATY. WHAT WAS MOST REMARKABLE IN THOSE MEETINGS WAS THAT, AS SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID ON SEPTEMBER 30, 'IDEOLOGICAL SLOGANEERING HAS SUBSIDED' AND 'PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN ADAPTED TO SOLVE PROBLEMS'.

"YET THE BROAD CURRENCY OF THE MYTHS OF OAS INEFFECTIVENESS DAMAGES OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS QUITE AS MUCH AS IT SAPS THE INITIATIVE AND MORALE OF THE ORGANIZATION ITSELF. MY DELEGATION FEELS THAT OUR CURRENT APPROACH TO CHARTER REFORM, CENTERED AS IT HAS BEEN ON ABSTRACT DOCTRINE AND FREQUENTLY UNWORKABLE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, HAS DONE NOTHING TO REMEDY THE PROBLEM.

"YET THE FACT IS THAT OUR PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS ARE DAILY MORE AWARE THAT THE INTERDEPENDENCE AMONG OUR SOCIETIES REQUIRES FULL USE OF EVERY POSSIBLE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION AMONG US. THIS ORGANIZATION IS A UNIQUE FORUM FOR INTER-AMERICAN COOPERATION. I BELIEVE ALL OF US ARE DEDICATED TO MAKING IT WORK BETTER.

"WE WILL BE DISCUSSING IDEAS OF HOW TO DO THIS IN GREATER DETAIL IN THE CONSULTATIONS MY COLLEAGUES AND I

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ARE NOW PLANNING WITH YOUR GOVERNMENTS. WE WOULD HOPE THESE CONSULTATIONS WOULD RESULT IN PROPOSALS DIRECTED AT STRENGTHENING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OAS. THE ISSUES TO BE FACED RELATE TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL THE NUMEROUS SUBCOMMITTEES IT HAS ESTABLISHED, THE NEED TO REDUCE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH SERVICING AN EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF MEETINGS, THE DESIRABILITY OF STREAMLINING THE SECRETARIAT, THE COUNCILS AND THE OTHER ORGANS.

"WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT MEMBERSHIP IN THE OAS SHOULD BE OFFERED TO ALL WESTERN HEMISPHERE STATES UPON THEIR ACHIEVEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE.

"THIS MERELY SUGGESTS SOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS WE WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO EN-

GAGING OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN A SERIOUS QUEST FOR MODERNIZING
AND RESTRUCTURING THE SYSTEM. WHAT IS NEEDED IS THE
INVOLVEMENT OF EACH OF THE MEMBER STATES AT THE LEVEL OF
POLITICAL DECISION. REVIVING CEESI FOR A NEW ROUND OF
NEGOTIATIONS ON HOW TO REWORD THE PRESENT CHARTER WOULD B
AS STERILE AS IT WAS BEFORE. THE REVISION OF TEXTS DOES
NOT SOLVE THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF INFUSING OUR ORGANIZATIO
WITH DYNAMISM AND RELEVANCE.

"MY GOVERNMENT HAS MADE ITS DETERMINATION TO TRY.
LET US WORK TOGETHER TO GIVE THIS VALUABLE INSTRUMENT OF
INTER-AMERICAN COOPERATION A NEW LEASE ON LIFE. AN ACT OF
WILL IS NOW REQUIRED TO RESTORE THE VISION ALL OF US HAD
OF AN ORGANIZATION READY TO COPE WITH THE CHALLENGE OF A
NEW ERA IN THE AMERICAS." KISSINGER

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